

Dear Commissioners:

Stop hidden phone fees so I can truly compare prices of phone services. I support the petition filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates and endorsed by other consumer advocacy organizations. CG Docket No. 04-208, Petition for Declaratory Ruling Regarding Truth-In-Billing and Billing Format, is long overdue.

Phone bills should be truthful and easy to understand.

Dear FCC,

It seems that transparency has become a major issue in America. In government, the stock market, corporate governance and accountability. Thus, it seems, there should be no reason why complete transparency shouldn't apply to a simple phone bill, which is no longer simple. Mine, from Verizon, goes on for pages. And it looks more like a stockholder's report than a bill. I'm sure it spells profits for many a stockholder as well as the firm, given all the hidden charges that are locked in the various categories of the bill. The bottom line is that my phone bill has taken on a life of its own and keeps growing with these charges like the plant in the play, "Little Shop of Horrors." I'm sure, given the full weight and measure of the Federal Communications Commission, leaning on the phone companies a bit could help them see the light, and help us see what exactly we're paying for. It seems only in keeping with the greater societal theme of transparency. In short, what's good for General Motors' accounting, should be good every phone-bearing American. No body wants a bill that looks like it came from Enron.

Because this practice is tolerated by the FCC, long distance and wireless phone companies are able to hide the true cost of service. These add-ons make the advertised price of service significantly less than the amount of the check I have to write each month to pay the bill. Competition will not work if consumers cannot accurately compare prices when shopping for service.

Many states are stepping up to address this problem. They should be allowed to proceed. However, the FCC shouldn't shirk its responsibility, nor limit states from doing more.

The FCC should immediately grant the NASUCA petition to investigate billing practices, and prohibit phone and wireless companies from imposing separate monthly fees, line items or surcharges unless expressly mandated by law or the charge is expressly authorized by a governmental authority.